WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

News Release

CORRECTION -- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 4, 2001
01-071c

Which polluted waterways should Ecology Dept. clean up this year?

OLYMPIA – Local communities, Indian tribes, industries and citizens are encouraged to offer comments on which polluted waterways the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) should begin cleaning up this year.

"We don't have the staff resources to tackle all 600 polluted waterways all at once," said Megan White, who manages Ecology's water quality program. "Many of the pollution problems in these waterways come from neighborhood developments, farming and other areas that involve many people. That's why the public's views are essential to setting our cleanup priorities."

Following consultation with local governments, Indian tribes and others, Ecology is proposing to begin cleaning up or taking further samples of the waterways identified below (**correction to the news release includes the addition of Lewis, Thurston and Whatcom county water bodies**.)

Primary Location	Water Body	Pollution Problems
	Columbia River	High levels of nitrogen gas that is harmful to fish
Chelan County	Lake Chelan/Roses Lake	PCBs (federal law banned these toxic chemicals in transformers and other industrial purposes in 1979) and pesticides
Chelan County	Mission Creek	Pesticides
Chelan County	Wenatchee River Basin	Low levels of oxygen levels, elevated temperatures, fecal coliform bacteria, pH
Clark County	Columbia River *	Arsenic
Cowlitz County	Cowlitz River *	Arsenic
King County	Bear-Evans Creeks *	Mercury
King County	Chambers Creek *	PCB
King County	Green River	Chromium, fecal coliform bacteria, low levels of oxygen, and high temperature (King County and Ecology staff plan to address this cleanup)
King County	Kelsey Creek *	Pesticides
King County	May Creek *	Copper, lead, zinc
King County	Springbrook (Mill) Creek *	Cadmium, chromium, copper, mercury, zinc
Kitsap County	Dyes/Sinclair Inlets and Port Washington Narrows *	Metals, organic materials (waste from plants or animals), arsenic
Kitsap County	Eagle Harbor *	Arsenic
Kitsap County	Port Orchard, Agate, and Rich Passages *	Arsenic
Kitsap County	Sinclair and Dyes Inlets	Toxic substances, fecal coliform bacteria , zinc, PCBs (Ecology and U.S. Navy staff plan to address this cleanup)

Klickitat County	Columbia River *	Arsenic
Pacific County	Willapa River	Elevated temperature
Pierce County	Puyallup River *	Arsenic
Pierce County	White (Stuck) River *	Copper, mercury
Snohomish County	Skykomish River *	Copper, lead, silver
Snohomish County	Snohomish River *	Copper, mercury
Thurston County	Henderson Inlet and Woodland, Woodard, Dobbs, and Libby Creeks	Fecal coliform bacteria, pH, low levels of oxygen, elevated temperature
Thurston County	Nisqually/McAllister Creeks	Fecal coliform bacteria, low levels of oxygen
Thurston-Lewis counties	Upper Chehalis River	Fecal coliform bacteria
Walla Walla County	Walla Walla River, Touchet River and Mill Creek	Elevated temperature, pesticides, fecal coliform bacteria, pH
Whatcom County	Lake Whatcom	Low levels of oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria
Whatcom County	Whatcom Creek	Fecal coliform bacteria, elevated temperature, pH (Ecology and city of Bellingham plan to address this cleanup)

(* Proposed for additional samples to determine the levels of pollutants and whether cleanup plans are needed.)

If Ecology receives additional funding to clean up waterways, the agency proposes to do the following four projects.

Primary Location	Water Body	Pollution Problems
Chelan County	Entiat River	Elevated temperature
Ferry County	Sherman Creek	Elevated temperature
Whatcom County	Drayton Harbor	Low levels of oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria
Whatcom County	Silver Creek	Low levels of oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria

Ecology also plans to sample other waterways statewide to gather further information about metals and organic chemicals such as pesticides.

Ecology selected the proposed water bodies based on the severity of the pollution, the potential for the contamination to harm the health of people and aquatic life, and interference to uses such as swimming, boating and fish habitat.

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop water cleanup plans (also called "total maximum daily loads") for polluted waters. The plans determine the amount of pollution a water body can receive and still remain healthy. They also identify sources of pollutants and how much pollution needs to be reduced so the water can be healthy for fish, drinking, recreation, industries and other uses.

Currently, Ecology is working on approximately 103 water cleanup plans on 34 major water bodies.

People should send comments on the proposed cleanup list by June 6, to Ron McBride, Dept. of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Wash., 98504-7600, or e-mail them to rmcb461@ecy.wa.gov. After reviewing comments, Ecology will make a decision this summer on the final cleanup list.

# # #

Contact: Mary Getchell, Public Information Manager, 360-407-6157; 360-534-8590 (pager)
Ron McBride, Water Cleanup Coordinator, (360) 407-6469

Ecology's Water Cleanup Plans website: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/

Broadcast Version

Tell the Dept. of Ecology which waterways to clean up this year

The Washington Department of Ecology wants public comments on which waterways should be the highest priority to begin cleaning up this year.

There are more than 600 polluted waterways across Washington. The Department of Ecology is proposing to begin cleanups or take further water samples in several waterways this year -- in **Chelan, Clark, Cowlitz, Garfield, King, Kitsap, Klickitat, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston**, **and Whatcom counties**.

Citizens have until June 6th to send their comments to the Department of Ecology.